Amendments to the Claims:

        This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

        1-50.   (Canceled)

        51.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising returning an indication of the determined set of electronic files.

        52.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 51 wherein returning the indication of the set of electronic files includes returning a list of electronic files that contain content that matches the specified text or metadata characteristic.

        53.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein storing the metadata in the second server unit includes storing the metadata in a database.

        54.   (Canceled)

        55.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the legal proceeding is a discovery proceeding that is part of a lawsuit, a mergers and acquisitions proceeding, or a due diligence effort.

        56.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding, the electronic files produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, comprises:

        receiving, from the information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data for legal purposes, at least some electronic files that have been previously exchanged between the at least one party and another party prior to the legal proceeding, the

external information system belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding and having stored therein these electronic files, wherein the plurality of electronic files are received at the computer system during the legal proceeding, the computer system not belonging to any party of the legal proceeding.

57.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein the received electronic files include stored emails, and wherein storing the metadata in the second server unit includes storing threading information associated with the emails.

58.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding from the external information system includes receiving an electronic calendar, electronic schedule, spreadsheet, word-processing file, electronic files arranged in the directory structure, or graphical data.

59.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein storing the metadata in the second server unit includes storing metadata associated with a native format of each of the received electronic files.

60.   (Currently Amended) A method in a computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, the method comprising:

receiving, from an information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are stored in a hierarchical directory data structure arranged according to a directory structure, that are subject to a legal proceeding, and that are produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, said received plurality of electronic files having electronic characteristics that include metadata;

recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from a plurality of paths of said hierarchical directory data structure of the data structure that is received from the external information system using a plurality of recursive engines, each of the plurality of recursive

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engines configured to extract a different file type and to cooperate with other of the plurality of recursive engines to extract other types of files;

storing the recursively extracted electronic files in a searchable text format in a first server unit, including storing textual content of the recursively extracted electronic files in the searchable text format in the first server unit;

obtaining the metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files, and storing the metadata in a second server unit, said storing including storing information of said hierarchical directory ~~structure of the received~~ data structure so as to maintain said hierarchical directory ~~structure~~;

converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a read-only format, and storing the electronic files in the read-only format in a third server unit;

receiving a request for electronic files having a specified text or metadata characteristic; and

processing the stored metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified text or metadata characteristic, thereby facilitating processing of the determined set of electronic files for legal purposes.

61.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein at least some of the recursively extracted electronic files include emails having attachments, the method further comprising:

storing the emails in a read-only format in the third server unit and in the searchable format in the first server unit;

separately storing the attachments in a read-only format in the third server unit and in a searchable format in the first server unit; and

storing metadata associated with the attachments in the second server unit.

62.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from the plurality of paths of the data structure received from the external information system includes recursively extracting the plurality of electronic

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files from a storage medium delivered from the external information system in response to a production request issued during the legal proceeding.

63.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files includes recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files using application programs that can read and translate the electronic files.

64.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60, further comprising providing a user interface to display an electronic file having the specified text or metadata characteristic and that is responsive to the request, and wherein the user interface is usable to apply legal annotations to the electronic files having the specified text or metadata characteristic and that are responsive to the request.

65.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 64 wherein the legal annotations include at least one of reviewed, privileged, hot, responsive, or witness preparation annotations.

66.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60, further comprising providing summary information indicative of electronic files that are available to be processed to determine the set of electronic files having the specified text or metadata characteristic.

67.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60, further comprising processing the electronic files in the searchable text format to determine the set of electronic files having the specified text characteristic.

68.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein receiving the request for electronic files having a specified text or metadata characteristic includes receiving a request that specifies at least one of the following: a word in an electronic file, a sender of an email, a recipient of an email, a subject of an email, a date associated with an electronic file,

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properties information associated with the electronic file, an annotation to an electronic file, attachment information, a case identifier, or a collection name.

69.   (Previously Presented) A method in a computer system for facilitating the analysis of data produced for legal purposes, the method comprising:

receiving, from an information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, that are produced for purposes of the legal proceeding by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, and that are stored prior to being received by the computer system in a <u>hierarchical directory</u> data structure associated with the external information system, said received plurality of electronic files having electronic characteristics that include metadata;

recursively extracting from a plurality of paths of ~~a~~ <u>said hierarchical</u> directory ~~structure of the data~~ structure the plurality of electronic files received from the external information system <u>using a plurality of recursive engines, each of the plurality of recursive engines configured to extract a different file type and to cooperate with other of the plurality of recursive engines to extract other types of files</u>;

converting each of the recursively extracted electronic files to a searchable text format, and storing in a first server unit content of the converted files in the searchable text format;

obtaining and storing in a second server unit said metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

converting each of the recursively extracted electronic files to a format displayable on a display screen, and storing the converted files in the displayable format in a third server unit; and

responding to a request for at least one file having specified metadata or text characteristics using respectively at least one of the stored metadata or the stored content.

70.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 69 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding further comprises:

receiving, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been previously exchanged between the at least one party and another party prior to the legal proceeding and stored in the data structure, the external information system and the data structure belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding, and

the computer system not belonging to the at least one party .

71.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 69 wherein the received electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the method further comprising:

storing the emails in the displayable format in the third server unit and in the searchable format in the first server unit;

separately storing the attachments in said displayable format in the third server unit and in said searchable text format in the first server unit; and

storing metadata associated with the attachments in the second server unit.

72.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 71 wherein obtaining and storing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files includes obtaining and storing in the second server unit threading information associated with the emails.

73.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 69 wherein recursively extracting the electronic files from the data structure comprises:

determining which versions of applications can respectively read each of the electronic files in the data structure; and

using the determined versions of the applications to read their respective electronic files.

74.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 69, further comprising:

receiving a query for electronic files having a specified metadata or text characteristic;

returning a response to the query, the response being indicative of electronic files that have the specified metadata or text characteristic; and

presenting a copy of at least one of these electronic files in a user interface along with legal annotation selections to apply to the copy of the electronic file.

75.   (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture for a computer system, the article of manufacture comprising:

a computer-readable medium having instructions stored thereon that are executable by a computer processor to analyze data produced for legal purposes, by:

loading, from an information system external to the computer system having the machine-readable medium, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, that are produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, and that are stored in a hierarchical directory data structure associated with the external information system prior to being loaded at the computer system, said loaded plurality of electronic files having electronic characteristics that include metadata;

recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from a plurality of paths of a the loaded hierarchical directory structure of the loaded data structure using a plurality of recursive engines, each of the plurality of recursive engines configured to extract a different file type and to cooperate with other of the plurality of recursive engines to extract other types of files;

converting and storing in a first server unit content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide a searchable text format;

obtaining and storing in a second server unit said metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a format displayable on a display screen, and storing the converted files in the displayable format in a third server unit.

76.   (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the instructions to load the electronic files include instructions to:

load, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been exchanged between the at least one party and another party prior to the legal proceeding and stored in the data structure, the external information system and the data structure belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding, and the computer system not belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding.

77.   (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the loaded electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the computer-readable medium further including instructions stored thereon that are executable by said processor to:

store the emails in a displayable format in the third server unit and in the searchable format in the first server unit;

separately store the attachments in said displayable format in the third server unit and in said searchable text format in the first server unit; and

store metadata associated with the attachments and threading information associated with the emails in the second server unit.

78.   (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the loaded electronic files include an electronic calendar, an electronic schedule, a spreadsheet, a word-processing file, electronic files arranged in the directory structure, or graphical data.

79.   (Canceled)

80.-84.   (Canceled)

85. (Currently Amended) A computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, the computer system comprising:

at least one recursive engine receiving, from an information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, the electronic files produced by and belonging to at least one party involved in the legal proceeding and stored in a storage medium, said received plurality of electronic files having electronic characteristics that include metadata, and said at least one recursive engine <u>recursively</u> extracting the plurality of electronic files from <u>each of</u> a plurality of paths of a <u>hierarchical</u> directory structure in the storage medium, <u>the at least one recursive engine configured to extract files of one type and to cooperate with the other recursive engines to extract files of other file types</u>;

a conversion engine converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a searchable text format, and obtaining metadata associated with the received electronic files;

a first server unit coupled to the conversion engine storing the converted electronic files in the searchable text format;

a second server unit coupled to the conversion engine storing the obtained metadata associated with the received electronic files; and

another engine in communication with the first and second server units receiving a request for electronic files having a specified metadata characteristic and processing the stored metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified metadata characteristic.

86. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising at least one application that can read a format of the received electronic files.

87. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85 wherein the received electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the computer system further including:

at least one controller coupled to the recursive engine determining a server unit to which to send the extracted electronic files; and

a third server unit coupled to the controller storing the emails in a format displayable on a display screen and separately storing the attachments in the displayable format, wherein the first server unit stores the attachments in said searchable text format and wherein the second server unit stores metadata associated with the attachments and threading information associated with the emails.

88.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 85, further comprising a first administration program generating another directory structure in the first server unit that indexes text data stored therein.

89.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 88, further comprising a second administration program generating catalog and directory parameters that reference the directory structure in the first server unit and the text data stored therein.

90.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 85, further comprising at least one administration program generating catalog and database parameters that reference the second server unit and the metadata stored therein.

91.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 85, further comprising another server unit, coupled between a client terminal and the another engine, receiving the request from the client terminal and passing the request to the another engine to allow the another engine to apply the specified characteristic in the request to at least one of the first and second server units to the database, the another engine being configured to return responsive results of the request to another server unit.

92.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 91 wherein the another server unit includes a virtual directory referencing data stored in the first and second server units.

93. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising:

a server coupled to the another engine and to the first and second server units;

a user authentication unit communicatively coupled to the server controlling access to the server;

a user information unit communicatively coupled to the server storing information associated with users authenticated by and provided with access by the user authentication unit; and

an administration unit supporting services between the server and the user authentication and user information units.

94. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 93 wherein the server supports legal annotation tools on a user interface that is arranged to present a copy of an electronic file that has the specified characteristic.

95. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85 wherein the first and second server units comprise part of a database system.

96. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 69 wherein the obtaining and storing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files in the second server unit further comprises:

obtaining and storing in the second server unit metadata that preserves information regarding the directory structure in which the files are stored.

97. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 69 wherein the responding to the request for at least one file having specified metadata or text characteristics using respectively at least one of the metadata or the stored content comprises:

responding to a request for at least one file having metadata characteristics that are based upon an arrangement of the at least one file in the directory structure using the stored metadata.